OMCs have also initiated a dialogue with both public and private sector stand-alone refiners to provide suitable trade discounts in the refinery transfer price to offset their under-recoveries.

Purchase of crude from Israel

2295. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India propose to diversify its sources of crude supplies by using an Israeli pipeline to access crude oil from the Central Asia and Caspian Sea region to feed its fuel needs;

(b) if so, whether any agreement between India and Israel has been reached;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Russia had also proposed to use the Israeli pipeline for export of oil to Asia?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Given **the** increasing dependence on imported crude, it is the constant endeavour of the Government to diversify its sources of crude supplies. Accordingly, the possibility of using the Ashkelon-Eilat (Israeli) pipeline for crude oil that India may pick up at the Ceyhan Terminal of the Baku-Tiblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, as a supplement to the Suez Canal route, has been mooted for use, if required. While no agreement has been signed between the Government of Israel and Government of India in this regard, the oil companies will consider using Ashkelon-Eilat pipeline, subject to commercial economics, once the pipeline is made operational by the end 2005.

New policy on allotment of retail outlets

2296. SHRI BALAVANT ALIAS BAL APTE:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of diesel/petrol retail outlets allotted in the country during 2004 and 2005, State/Union Territory-wise and year-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to formulate a new policy for allotment of petrol retail outlets; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMANISHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The total number of retail outlets allotted by the public sector OMCs in the country during the years 2004 and 2005 (from January to June 2005) was 6,676 and 1,799 respectively.

Based on certain broad parameters advised by the Government to the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), the latter have framed their guidelines for the selection of retail outlet dealerships, LPG distributorships and SKO-LDO dealerships for viable locations in the country, and have been making selections and allotments of such dealerships/distributorships in terms of these guidelines. These guidelines, which are objective and transparent in nature, provide for a detailed procedure to be followed by the OMCs in making selection/allotment of dealers/distributors. At present, Government do not contemplate to formulate any new policy in the matter.

Benami allotments in reserved categories

2297. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR:
SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaints against some rich and influential persons of general category for having got benami allotment of petrol pumps and LPG agencies actually earmarked for SCs/STs;

(b) if so, the details of such complaints, State-wise, particularly from Punjab;

(c) the action taken against the persons who got such benami allotments in their names and the Oil Marketing Companies which made these benami allotments, State-wise; and